

CORNERSTONE 2018 RESOURCE

Linking Language: Using Poetry To Explore Body Image at Camp *Elective 1*

AUTHOR(S):	Caroline Rothstein, Natalie Rothstein
SUMMARY:	In this interactive elective, you will explore how to use poetry as a way to express emotions and thoughts about body image and culture at camp. You will learn how poetry can offer healing, restoration, and support around body image and culture at camp and beyond. Through group discussion and a poetry-writing workshop, this session will help you feel confident using your artistic and emotional palettes to help empower your campers and yourself in creating lasting and sustainable positive change. - <i>Submitted by Caroline Rothstein & Natalie Rothstein (co-facilitated)</i>
TOPIC(S):	Body Image, Mental Health, Writing
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	The goal of this session is to provide participants with tools to both explore their personal experiences with body image, as well as have the ability to guide their campers and colleagues in creating a positive body culture at camp. Participants will also learn how to use poetry and writing as a healthy means for self-expression.
AUDIENCE:	Ideal age group is 11 and up, including staff; ideal group size is 10 to 30 participants
TIMING:	60 to 75 minutes (can even be adjusted to fit as short as 45-minute or as long as 90-minute programming)
APPENDICES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video Links to Caroline Rothstein's "Fat" & "Body"
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry / art texts • Writing utensils • Paper

CORNERSTONE 2018 RESOURCE

SET-UP DETAILS:

This program should take place in a location/space that is comfortable for participants to write, while also feel some sense of privacy. For example, a table in an empty dining hall, or the bunk, or a small room space, or being in a circle outside or at the waterfront, or in the woods – the possibilities are endless, as long as it is comfortable for writing both physically and emotionally.

Ensuring that the participants are in a circle is the ideal space set-up for this program – whether participants are at tables/chairs, or on the floor/ground.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- Invite participants to find a seat in the circle and each have a writing utensil and paper.
- Begin session.
- Welcome participants and share workshop goal and agenda (5 minutes)
 - o Workshop goal: to use poetry as a way to express emotions and thoughts about body image and culture at camp.
 - o Workshop agenda:
 - Opening exercise
 - Performance (and/or text share)
 - Discussion / debrief
 - Writing workshop
 - Sharing
 - Closing
 - o Guidelines and group agreements for creating a brave and safe(r) space:
 - Use “I” statements
 - Confidentiality
 - Ask clarifying questions
 - Meet risk with risk
 - It’s ok to be raggedy
 - Self-regulate self-care (i.e. it’s ok to step outside if needed)
 - Facilitators are available after
- Begin opening activity and ice-breaker (5 minutes):
 - o Ask participants to share their name, their pronouns if they feel comfortable, and one thing for which they are grateful today.
- Performance (10 minutes):
 - o Caroline performs her poem “Fat” (Can substitute other poems / videos / texts)
 - o Caroline performs her poem “Body” (Can substitute other poems / videos / texts)
- Discussion/Debrief (12 minutes):
 - o Ask participants:
 - What resonated?
 - What stood out?

CORNERSTONE 2018 RESOURCE

- Writing Workshop (20 minutes);
 - o Jewish law and ethics promote the importance of taking care of our bodies and allowing for healing. The way Jewish law approaches the body emphasizes a vision of taking care of ourselves and being kind to our bodies – both emotionally and physically.
 - Ask participants to free write on the following question (3 minutes):
 - How does this relate Jewish values to body image?
 - Ask participants to star their favorite line and underline something that surprised them. (2 minutes)
 - Ask for volunteers to share either what they starred or underlined.
 - Ask participants to make a list of 3 to 5 parts of their body, or aspect of their body image that they want to bring attention to. (15 minutes)
 - Ask participants to circle 1 thing from their list.
 - Ask participants to write either a love letter or a thank you note in the form of a poem to the part/thing they circled.

- Sharing (10 minutes)
 - o Ask volunteers to share what they've written.

- (If bringing this back to camp, closing activity/thank you goes here)

- (At Cornerstone) Transition into closing and debrief. (10 minutes)
 - o Ask participants: how can you envision using poetry as a tool for expression at camp? Either their workshop, or the ideas / skills / topics covered, etc.
 - o Facilitators offer ways to incorporate poetry as a mode for expression into workshops and programming into camp:
 - Participants can use their own poems (or find other poems, etc.) to model
 - Bunk-wide writing workshops.
 - Camp-wide writing prompts.
 - Bunk / age-group/ camp-wide open mics.
 - Camp-wide open mics.
 - Anthologies / literary magazines.

- Closing (3 minute)
 - o Thank participants and ask them to share a word about what they learned and/or are taking away.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

Three recommendations, adjustments, and adaptations for bringing this back to camp!

- 1) Use your own poetry/writing to be the material that inspires both the discussion and writing!

- 2) If counselors / staff want to use a different theme for the writing prompt other than Judaism and body image, it is recommended they keep the structure of the workshop the same, and change the following sections: the poem or art used at in the sharing opener, the nature of questions in the discussion, and the writing prompt.
- 3) An amazing way to take this writing workshop from small group and bunk programming and make it camp-wide is to have smaller groups and/or bunks replicate writing workshops – on the theme in this or any specific topic or theme – and have a camp-wide or age-group-wide open-mic or poetry slam competition.